

## **Minutes - King County Rural Forest Commission Meeting Thursday, November 12, 2015, Preston Community Center**

Commissioners present: Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair); Bernie McKinney, Green River Coalition (Vice Chair); Daryl Harper, forest landowner; Dick Ryon, North Bend resident; Rex Thompson, forester; Doug McClelland, Washington Department of Natural Resources; Brandy Reed, King Conservation District; Andy Chittick, forest landowner/sawmill operator; Amy LaBarge, Forester; Monica Paulsen Priebe, Green River College; Grady Steere, Hancock Forest Management; Doug Schindler, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Guests: Audrey Riddell and Bryant Nagelson, University of Washington

King County Staff: Kathy Creahan, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD); Richard Martin, WLRD; Kristi McClelland, WLRD; Bill Loeber, WLRD; Ivan Miller, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget; David Kimmett, Parks and Recreation Division

Chair Nate Veranth called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

### **Motions**

Motion 11-0115 That the minutes of the September 10, 2015 meeting be approved with amendments. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion of proposed additions to King County's Land Inventory**

The commission members discussed the status of a proposed ordinance that would update the inventory of high conservation value properties to add new properties and correct technical errors in the existing inventory. The commission had sent a letter of support for the inventory update but at the time of this meeting, the ordinance had not been passed.

During the discussion several considerations related to the inventory were raised, such as the process of determining which properties should be included in the inventory, and whether the resources of the Parks Division would be sufficient to manage lands in the inventory. The commission decided to continue the discussion of these issues at a future meeting.

### **2016 Comprehensive Plan Update: Public Review Draft**

Ivan Miller, Comprehensive Planning Manager, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Ivan reviewed the schedule the current and future public review drafts of the *2016 Comprehensive Plan Update* (Plan). The current public comment period would conclude on January 6, 2016. Ivan asked the commission to comment in particular on elements of the Plan and the associated Area Land Use Studies with which they did not agree.

The commission's recommendations included a number of technical corrections and additions. In addition, there were broader policy recommendations, including the following:

- Ensure that references to forest functions, forest values and soil health throughout are consistent throughout the Plan. For example, include forest cover and healthy soils as components of stormwater management consistently. Policy R-336 was cited as a good model to follow.

- While Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was mentioned in the Plan, an overarching IPM policy or a reference to the County's IMP policy seemed to be missing.
- The narrative associated with R-622 should encourage County collaboration with Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest land managers more strongly.
- Make sure that the concepts of promoting stewardship and incentive-based programs for private landowners are strong throughout the document on a policy level.
- Four-to-One Program criteria should ensure that only lands of high value for conservation would be accepted in Four-to-One projects.
- In connection to policy I-203 edits, where the Plan would remove a provision for considering proposals for a mining site conversion demonstration project on an annual cycle, make it clear that any other changes in Resource Land uses would be considered "substantive" changes to comprehensive plan policies and subject to the 4-year cycle. For example, a change in the Forest Production District boundary would be considered a substantive change.
- Regarding Area Zoning Study #6 - Snoqualmie Interchange. Agreed with the recommendation not to expand the Urban Growth Boundary at this site.
- Agreed with the internal request to rezone ten parcels within King County Parks' Taylor Mountain Forest from RA to F-zoning and include those parcels in the Forest Production District.

**University of Washington Students report: Preston Ridge - Mitchell Hill - Raging River Forest Stewardship Plan**

Audrey Riddell and Bryant Nagelson, School of Environmental & Forest Sciences, University of Washington

David Kimmett, King County Parks Division, provided an introduction. He handed out a description of the Division's Forest Stewardship Program and a list of all of the forest harvests that the Division has undertaken during the last 10 years. All of those sites have forest plans, according to Dave. He explained that one of the ways that the county was moving forward on stewardship of county-owned forests was developing forest stewardship plans and implementing those plans. The county had partnered with the University of Washington to develop such plans on some of their sites while providing field experience to students. Dave said that in 2015 the class developed a combined forest stewardship plan covering about 1,100 acres on 3 different sites in the Preston area: Preston Ridge, Mitchell Hill and Raging River.

Bryant and Audrey provided a thorough discussion of the organization of the project, the software used and the methods used to evaluate forest cover types, changes across the sites, and ground-truthing existing information on trails and streams. They said that the plan objectives were: wildlife and habitat quality, riparian health/water quality, revenue potential, carbon storage, recreation opportunities and aesthetics.

Audrey described the various ecotypes found on the three sites. These were evaluated in terms of structure and species diversity. Among the ecotypes described were Douglas fir plantation, mixed conifer and hardwood, and hardwood-dominated.

Bryant reviewed the forest stewardship objectives and the students' recommendations for achieving them in the different ecotype sections. For example, they looked at heating of streams and developed scenarios that would increase shading, especially in the summer months, and would increase the number of conifer logs entering the water. Conifer logs decay more slowly than hardwoods, he explained, providing habitat

and structural benefits over a longer period. He said they also wanted to maintain some of mature hardwoods in riparian areas for wildlife, leaf litter benefits to soil and habitat.

Daryl Harper asked the students what they had learned about the economic side of forestry. Bryant commented they did look at the costs of implementing the actions recommended in their plans. He said that they learned that theory is one thing, but when look at the operational side sometimes the theory would not work in practice because of operational constraints such as access costs.

Doug M commented that the three sites are managed by the Parks Division, but they are not and have never been parks. This is part of a larger block of forestland surrounded by rural residential land use. He said that would be important for the County to move forward with implementing the students' recommendations. Among the students' observations was that one could use the revenue from harvesting in one area to pay for work to benefit forest health in other areas. The public would not want to see precious general fund dollars to pay for forest restoration when you can pay for it out of operations, he said. He added that the County should have a clear internal understanding of which county-owned forested properties are "working forest."

Bernie McKinney added that forests are not made up of trees alone, but that the full gamut of western Washington's 3,000 native plants should be taken into consideration in restoration plans. He said that where forested properties are designated for restoration, there should be a clear point of reference for what condition we are trying to build back to.

David Kimmett thanked Audrey and Bryant for sharing their experience with the commission.

### **Staff and Agency Reports and Announcements**

*Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)* – Doug McClelland observed that a real need for educating the many new residents that come to our area about forests and forestry. An example was a public meeting in Mirrormont regarding a timber harvest that DNR had on Tiger Mountain. A lot of people came to the meeting and the DNR staff learned that the new residents did not know the 30-year history of Tiger Mountain, why DNR cuts timber, why they use herbicides, or why they leave piles of debris when trees are cut.

Doug reported on a number of new trails on state lands. He highly recommended a stroll across the new 200-foot long bridge on the Highpoint Trail on Tiger Mountain. He also described a process that would be getting underway for a new trail at Teneriffe Falls at the end of the Mt Si Road.

*King Conservation District (KCD)* – Brandy Reed reported that the KCD had finished identifying its 2015 UF health management projects. They have identified 8 jurisdictions with whom they will work on urban forest health management activities during the coming year. Project details will be available on the KCD website [[www.kingcd.org](http://www.kingcd.org)].

*Commission Administration* – Nate led a discussion to plan meeting dates in 2016. The commission decided to meet on the second Thursday of every other month from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., beginning in January.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held January 21, 2016, at the Preston Community Center.

Staff Liaison: Linda Vane, at 206-477-4842 or [linda.vane@kingcounty.gov](mailto:linda.vane@kingcounty.gov)